

URGENT ACTION

AFGHAN JOURNALIST FREED

Afghan TV journalist Nasto Naderi has been released on bail by security forces in Afghanistan. However, he is still under investigation and could be put on trial for criticizing government officials.

Journalist **Nasto Naderi**, who hosts a programme on Afghan local TV station Noorin TV, was released on bail from detention on 8 May. He was detained on 21 April after the programme he hosts, broadcast material criticizing the mayor of Kabul. Nasto Naderi is not believed to have been tortured or otherwise ill-treated in custody.

The Attorney General's official investigating Nasto Naderi's case told media sources that Nasto Naderi had been charged with two offences: making accusations against high-profile government officials without proof; and drinking alcohol..

Amnesty International opposes the use of criminal defamation laws to protect the reputation of public officials and opposes laws prohibiting insult or disrespect of heads of state, public figures, the military or other public institutions, flags or symbols.

Although freedom of expression is provided under Afghanistan law, defamation is prohibited by the Afghan Media Law and the Afghanistan Penal Code and is punishable by imprisonment or fine. The use of alcohol is also an offence under the Afghanistan Penal Code and is punishable by short-term imprisonment or fine.

Nasto Naderi remains under investigation and the Attorney General's office has said that he may face trial. A government media regulatory body met on 3 May to discuss his case, but their conclusions have not been made public. It is not clear whether the charges brought against Nasto Naderi are intended to intimidate him.

Amnesty International will continue monitoring his situation closely, and will take further action as appropriate.

No further action is requested at this time from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA: 120/12. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA11/008/2012/en>

Name: Nasto Naderi

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 120/12 Index: ASA 11/010/2012 Issue Date: 11 May 2012

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